

A CURIOUS VARIETY OF *CHARAXES PYTHODORUS*,
FEMALE.

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In his paper on *Charaxes*, published in the *Journal of the East Africa Natural History Society*, (Butterflies of Kenya and Uganda, 1, Part VIII), Dr. van Someren makes mention of two races of *Ch. pythodorus*, *Ch. p. pythodorus* Hew., from Uganda, Kakamega, and Elgon, and *Ch. p. nesaea*, G.-Smth., from the coastal districts of Kenya. He describes the difference of *nesaea* from *pythodorus* as being the smaller size, discal blue bar more tinged with purplish, and underside richer yellow.

I have before me a specimen of *pythodorus* bred by me in February, 1933, in the Kama Koiwa district of the Trans-Nzoia, food-plant *Craibia brownii* Dunn. It is a female (when van Someren wrote his paper the females of both races were unknown, and as far as I am aware, the female of *nesaea* still is). It is only just over half the size of a normal female of the typical race, but may be an undersized specimen (it was bred from a nearly mature found larva). The chief points of difference lie in the coloration of both upper and under surfaces. The discal blue bar is distinctly purplish in colour, while the submarginal series of blue spots in the forewing are considerably larger than in typical *pythodorus* female. The submarginal spots in the hindwing are more distinct, especially at the anal angle, and are much whiter, less tinged with blue.

On the undersurface, again, is a difference. The whole ground-colour is richer, and the black lines and spots are more clearly defined than in typical *pythodorus*. In particular, the post-discal series of indistinct brown spots in the hindwing are deeper in colour, and much browner, as is the submarginal series of brown spots in the forewing. There is less greyish-purple about the "eye"-spot at the hind angle of the forewing, while the "U"-shaped mark in area 1 of the forewing is reduced to a large, irregular, black spot. The white spots in areas 2, 3, 4 & 5 of the forewing show through much more distinctly owing to the richer ground-colour.

The entire appearance of the specimen agrees far more with the description of *nesaea* from Teita and Taveta, than with that of *pythodorus* from the area in which this specimen was obtained. I have seen no other specimen of *pythodorus* (and many have passed through my hands), either male or female, which

approaches this in richness of coloration. This specimen is now in the collection of butterflies in the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi.

It would be interesting to discover if any link exists between the two races of *pythodorus*, at present separated by several hundred miles of highly diversified country. As far as my information goes, *nesaea* is rare. *Pythodorus*, on the other hand, though spoken of in van Someren's paper referred to above as uncommon, is, in my experience, fairly common where it occurs—in fact, in Kakamega, I found it to be one of the commonest *Charaxes*. It is of interest to note, with regard to the specimen described above, that Rothschild and Jordan place *pythodorus* from the Uganda-Kitale area as belonging to the race *nesaea*—a placing with which van Someren disagrees (see *Journal of the East Africa Natural History Society*, 12, Nos. 5 & 6, January-April, 1935, page 187).